

# A record of brood parasitism of Barratt's Warbler *Bradypterus barratti* by African Emerald Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx cupreus*

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**Une donnée de parasitisme de la Bouscarle des fourrés *Bradypterus barratti* par le Coucou foliotocol *Chrysococcyx cupreus*.** Le seul hôte du Coucou foliotocol *Chrysococcyx cupreus* connu avec certitude en Afrique australe est la Camaroptère à tête grise *Camaroptera brachyura*. L'auteur rapporte l'observation de deux Bouscarles des fourrés *Bradypterus barratti* adultes nourrissant un jeune Coucou foliotocol dans la forêt de Xumeni, KwaZulu-Natal, Afrique du Sud. Ceci constitue la première donnée de parasitisme chez la Bouscarle des fourrés, qui devient ainsi le deuxième hôte confirmé du Coucou foliotocol en Afrique australe.

**A**t Xumeni Forest (29°55'S 29°51'E), near Donnybrook, southern KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, on the afternoon of 7 January 2010, I was drawn to the presence of a nearby Barratt's Warbler *Bradypterus barratti* by its loud, distinctive song. Careful observation revealed two adults feeding a begging nestling in dense undergrowth beside the main track through the forest. The young bird was significantly larger than the adults and, based on its size, shape and barred plumage, I identified it as a juvenile *Chrysococcyx* cuckoo. I observed the two adult Barratt's Warblers feeding the young cuckoo for c.2 minutes at a distance of 5–10 m, at eye level. The underparts of the cuckoo, including the throat, were whitish with green bars, the crown had green markings, and there were no pale markings on the head. These features eliminated the possibility that the bird was a juvenile Klaas's Cuckoo *C. klaas* or Dideric Cuckoo *C. caprius* (Chittenden 2005), and led to my identification of the bird as a juvenile African Emerald Cuckoo *C. cupreus*. During the course of the afternoon I observed an adult male African Emerald Cuckoo singing nearby, but no other *Chrysococcyx* cuckoos.

In southern Africa the only proven host of African Emerald Cuckoo is Green-backed Camaroptera *Camaroptera brachyura*, although several other small, insectivorous passerines are suspected hosts (Chittenden 2005) and a wider range of passerine hosts have been recorded elsewhere in Africa (Irwin 1988, Payne 2005). This observation makes Barratt's Warbler only the second confirmed host of African Emerald Cuckoo in southern Africa, and the first member of the genus *Bradypterus*, although Little Rush Warbler *B. baboecala* is a known host of Dideric

Cuckoo (Squelch & Safe-Squelch 1994). This also constitutes the first record of brood parasitism in Barratt's Warbler (Vernon & Dean 2005).

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